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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000620

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: ABDUCTION OF EGYPTIAN DIPLOMAT POSSIBLE WARNING TO
GOE: "DO NOT FACILITATE HAMAS ENTRY INTO PA"

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) The kidnapping of Egyptian diplomat Husam al-Musly February 9 in Gaza has been met with condemnation by both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Initial press reports link the kidnapping to Fatah-affiliated factions aggrieved over their non-inclusion in the PA security services and/or security service personnel who have yet to receive their January salaries; however, ConGen sources speculate the kidnapping may be intended as a strong message of warning to the Egyptian Government, recent host of Hamas talks in Cairo, by an offshoot of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) hostile to the idea of Hamas participation in the next Palestinian government. End summary.

Press Reports Abduction
Message to the PA

¶2. (C) Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) immediately spoke out against the kidnapping of Egyptian diplomat Husam al-Musly, instructing the PA security forces (PASF) to initiate a search and declaring that the act "does not match the values of the Palestinian people." The PA Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs also issued statements strongly condemning the kidnapping. Al-Musly was reportedly abducted 200 meters from his office in Gaza City by two masked gunmen. PASF set up roadblocks around Gaza City and reportedly undertook intense intelligence gathering in a bid to track down the culprits. No faction has claimed responsibility, though the press has been quick to blame the Fatah-affiliated al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, speculating that the kidnapping may be a move to press the PA to incorporate al-Aqsa members into the security services. Egyptian Embassy official Nader al-A'ajer told the Consul General on 10 February that the Egyptians has several leads in the case and are working actively to obtain the release of their colleague.

¶3. (C) In contrast, ConGen sources in the PA General Intelligence point to a Popular Resistance Committee (PRC) offshoot headed by Mumtaz Dughmush as the mastermind behind the abduction, citing Dughmush's fervent objection to the inclusion of Hamas in the next Palestinian government as a plausible motive behind the attack. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu

Zuhri told local press that his movement views the kidnapping as a dire attempt to undermine Egyptian-Palestinian relations, highlighting the important role Egypt has played in internal Palestinian affairs. Egypt has been playing a critical role in ongoing talks between Hamas leaders on the formation of the next Palestinian government, is a frequent mediator between the Palestinian Authority and militants, and has twice brokered a truce between militants and the PA. Earlier this week, Cairo hosted talks between Hamas political figures based inside and outside of the Palestinian territories.

Security Service Personnel
Demand January Salaries

14. (C) In a separate development, lightly linked to the kidnapping in various reports given the tendency for Gaza kidnappings to be motivated by demands for employment, approximately 70 gunmen gathered at the PA Ministry of Finance in Gaza City February 9 to protest the fact that their salaries had not been paid for the month of January. (Note: approximately 20 foreigners have been abducted in Gaza in recent months. Most often, the perpetrators have demanded jobs in exchange for the prisoners' release. End note.) In Deir al Balah, gunmen blocked traffic on the main coastal road linking northern and southern Gaza. The gunmen evacuated both locations following promises by senior PA officials to pay salaries without delay. In several other West Bank cities, including Nablus and Hebron, gunmen showed up at local governors' offices to demand their salaries be paid immediately. PA sources report that as many as 14,000 security personnel have not yet received their salaries for the month of January but indicated that they would be paid soon.

WALLES